

James B. Price



JOINED ASTP AT TEXAS A&M. WHEN PROGRAM ABORTED, JIM WAS SENT TO CAMP HOWZE. ASSIGNED TO 103D INFANTRY DIVISION, 409TH REGIMENT, D-COMPANY, 1ST PLATOON - HEAVY MACHINE GUNNERS. FOUGHT THROUGH THE VOSGES MOUNTAINS CAMPAIGN. SERIOUSLY WOUNDED BY GERMAN TANK FIRE ON DECEMBER 2ND, 1944 IN THE BATTLE FOR SELESTAT, FRANCE. AVOIDED CAPTURE AND CARRIED TO SAFETY BY DOUG MERRILL.

SELESTAT

AROUND 3:15AM ON DECEMBER 2ND, 1944, 3 TO 6 GERMAN TANKS WITH APPROXIMATELY 600 SUPPORTING INFANTRY ROLLED DOWN THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE HOUSES THAT B & D COMPANIES WERE OCCUPYING. THE LEAD TANK WENT PAST THE HOUSES, ONLY TO BLOW THE BRIDGE THAT HAD BEEN VACATED. THE GIs ESCAPE ROUTE WAS GONE AND THEY HAD NO ANTI-TANK WEAPONRY. ONCE THE BRIDGE WAS GONE, THE TANKS FOCUSED ON THE MACHINE GUNS IN THE HOUSES. THEIR JOB WAS TO TAKE OUT THE MACHINE GUNS SO THEIR INFANTRY COULD SWARM THE HOUSES. THIS COULDN'T HAVE BEEN TOO DIFFICULT SINCE THE TANKS WERE AT POINT BLANK RANGE. THE FIRST 88 SHELL DESTROYED THEIR MACHINE GUN. THIS SHOT INSTANTLY KILLED SGT. VERNON SWANSON AND SERIOUSLY WOUNDED PFC JIM PRICE AND T/SGT ZACK SIGLER. PFC DOUG MERRILL WAS ONLY SHAKEN. IT WAS NOW APPARENT THAT THEY WOULD BECOME POWS. THEY KNEW THAT THE GERMAN TROOPS WOULD SOON BE ON THEM. THAT IS WHEN DOUG TOOK OVER. INSTEAD OF MAKING AN ATTEMPT FOR THE RIVER AND HIS OWN PERSONAL SAFETY, HE CARRIED JIM PRICE TO THE BASEMENT AND THE THREE PLAYED DEAD. WHEN THE GERMANS CAME IN THE HOUSE, THEY SURVEYED THE PREMISES, ASSUMED THE WORST AND LEFT. HOWEVER, THEY REMAINED OUTSIDE THE HOUSE FOR SOME TIME AS THEY GATHERED 89 B-COMPANY AND 18 D-COMPANY PRISONERS. AT DAYBREAK, ASSUMED TO BE 3 OR 4 HOURS LATER, THE THREE BATTERED GIs HEADED FOR THE RIVER AND SAFETY.

DOUG CARRIED JIM AND ZACK HOBbled AS BEST HE COULD. ZACK COLLAPSED AT THE RIVER BANK AND DIED FROM SHOCK OR BLOOD LOSS. JIM SURVIVED, THANKS TO DOUG'S HEROICS, BUT LOST A LEG AS A RESULT OF HIS WOUNDS FROM THE TANK BLAST.